

It's imperative that mass transportation in our country is safe and secure. Congress must take appropriate action to achieve these goals. One particular area of concern is our nation's railroads.

In recent years, the alarming number of train accidents and incidents across the country, particularly in the San Antonio area, clearly demonstrate a need for federally mandated rail safety provisions and standards. While we've seen some progress in recent years towards improving the level of safety with which our nation's rail system operates, much remains to be done in order to ensure that the number of railroad accidents and incidents are minimized.

I'm proud that this Congress is reviewing legislation that takes necessary steps to ensure that our nation's rail system meets strict safety and security standards. This legislation comprehensively addresses national rail safety concerns and was crafted following field hearings held across the country by the Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines and Hazardous Materials, including one conducted in San Antonio. Provisions of the bill specifically address human error and fatigue, two factors that were identified at the San Antonio field hearing as significant threats to rail safety. Appropriately, the bill requires the implementation of positive train controls, technology that will help curtail human operator error.

As the residents of Bexar County know, we must act now to address problems on America's railroads. I am committed to a comprehensive plan for rail safety and will continue to work hard on this issue until we're left with a national rail system that is safe and secure.